Statement-II

Criteria for upgrading/opening departmental sub-post offices:

(a) In Rural Areas :

The minimum work load of the Extra Departmental Branch Post Office, proposed to be upgraded, should be five hours per day. The permissible limit of annual loss is Rs.2400/- in Normal Rural areas and Rs.4800/- in Tribal and Hilly areas.

(b) In Urban Areas :

In Urban areas, the post office should initially be self-supporting, and, at the time of the first annual review, it should show a 5% profit to be eligible for further retention.

The minimum distance between two post offices should be 1.5 Kms. in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above, and 2 Kms. in other Urban Areas. No two-delivery offices, however, should be closer than 5 Kms. for each other.

Heads of Circles have powers to relax the distance condition in 10% of the cases.

A Delivery Post Office in Urban Area should have a minimum of 7 Postmen's beats.

Mobile rates of MTNL and Private companies

†2558. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the mobile rates of MTNL are at par with the mobile rates of other private companies;

(b) the position with regard to the use of MTNL service in comparison to other private companies; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) No, Sir. MTNL mobile tariffs are cheaper than the other cellular operators.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) The position of MTNL subscriber base as on 30th June, 2003 in comparison to other cellular operators in Delhi and Mumbai Circle is as follows :—

Name of Operator	Delhi	Mumbai
MTNL	125390	165451
Bharti Cellular	1068447	302703
Hutchison Essar	721396	769835
Idea Cellular	192909	Not operating
BPL Mobile	Not operating	648043

Increase in Cellular Phone users

2559. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the number of cellular phone users is growing in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The growth in the number of subscribers of Cellular Mobile Telephone service during the last six years in the country is given in the Statement enclosed. (*See* below)

(c) World-wide, increase in the number of new wireless/mobile phone users is higher than the number of new landline phone users. The same trend is visible in our country also. This is mainly because wireless/mobile phones provide the facility to a subscriber to be contacted at all times and all places, where the coverage of service is available.